

it, or are you fearful that NATO will have to strike again?

The President. I don't know. I think we have to be firm. We have seen in the past that when we have been firm in support of the United Nations mission, that it has tended to further negotiations. That's all we're trying to do, is to further negotiations.

Let me make one other comment, if I might. As you all know, we've been very concerned about the safety of Americans in Rwanda. As far as we know now, the last of the convoys containing all Americans who wish to leave has either passed into Burundi or is about to pass into Burundi.

And I just want to say a special word of thanks and gratitude on behalf of our entire Nation to our Ambassador, Ambassador Rawson, for the remarkable way in which he has handled himself and in which he went about guaranteeing the security and safety of American citizens during this very difficult situation. There may be more to say about that tomorrow. But for now, I just think we all ought to be grateful to him for the role he played in getting our people out to safety.

Q. Do you think this is a one time only attack in Bosnia? Do you think we'll have to use our air power again there?

The President. I think we have to be prepared to do it. But I don't have any reason to believe one way or the other. I'm not hopeful; I'm not skeptical. I just think that—you know, sometimes the command and control is not very tight there, the communications aren't all that tight. This may have been something that happened that was not authorized by any central authority on the part of the Bosnian Serbs. So I just think this is a clear expression of the will of NATO and the will of the United Nations and the UNPROFOR operation there. And it's a clear call to the Serbs to pull back from Gorazde and resume the negotiations.

Thank you very much.

Legalization of Drugs

Q. Do you have a response to the minister who wants to legalize drugs, Mr. President?

The President. I disagree.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. in the South Portico at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.N. Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi.

Exchange With Reporters on Bosnia

April 11, 1994

Q. What can you tell us about the latest air strikes in Bosnia?

The President. That the latest strikes were a direct response to General Rose's request for close air support, that the continued Serb shelling of Gorazde put the U.N. personnel there in danger, and that the air strikes were conducted in strict accordance of existing U.N. policy.

Q. Can you tell us how many aircraft, what type, and what kinds of targets they hit?

The President. They did hit some targets, and you'll be briefed about the details.

Q. Is the U.N. going to defend the people of Gorazde—however you pronounce?

The President. The United Nations is carrying out its mission there, and when they—they're attempting to reassert Gorazde as a safe area, which it has agreed to do. They're encouraging the Serbs to withdraw from the safe area and to resume negotiations and to stop the shelling. And if they are put at risk in the course of doing that mission, they can ask for NATO close air support. That's what they have done, and we have done our best to provide it.

Q. Only the U.N. personnel is our concern?

The President. The U.N. resolution gives NATO the authority to act. We are acting solely under the existing U.N. resolution which has been approved by the Security Council.

Q. Would it be—setting up an exclusion zone around Gorazde like—in Sarajevo?

The President. Well, what the United Nations wants is for the Serbs to stop the shelling and to withdraw and to resume the negotiations. I don't want to compare it exactly to Sarajevo; there are some tactical and factual differences. But that's what they want, and NATO simply responded to the request for air support in carrying out the U.N. mission.

Q. Did you talk to Mr. Yeltsin about this latest—

The President. No, I talked to him last evening, and he was going to be out of pocket today. So we had quite a long talk last night. And I told him that—I explained that this

was different from what happened at Sarajevo. There was a clearly existing U.N. policy, the same policy under which we acted when the planes were shot down, you remember, a few weeks ago, but that I thought we ought to have close coordination with the Russians. After all, the Russians are a part of the UNPROFOR delegation there. They have soldiers on the ground in Bosnia. And we had a good talk. And I think there have been further communications today between the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister and between the Secretary of Defense and the Defense Minister. So we are trying to work very closely with the Russians. They have a critical role to play if we are going to get these peace talks going again. And I hope we can.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. We had quite a good talk, I thought. I explained to him what happened. I think in the beginning he was concerned that he didn't know about it in advance. I explained clearly what happened, that the United Nations asked for this, that Boutros-Ghali the day before had put out a press release supporting this action if the shelling didn't stop, that General Rose had received the appropriate approval from the civilian authority in Bosnia, and that it was an action taken under existing authority, and that indeed I thought that the U.N. had notified all the UNPROFOR members that it would be taken, but that it was not any kind of new or different thing. And when these things occur, there is often not a lot of time. There was just, you know, somewhere between 30 minutes and an hour and a half, I think, the decisionmaking time. I don't know the exact time, but we responded in an entirely appropriate way, I think, under the circumstances.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:19 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House, prior to a foreign policy meeting. In his remarks, the President referred to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Telephone Conversation on Public Housing April 11, 1994

Secretary Henry Cisneros. Mr. President, this is Henry Cisneros in Chicago.

The President. Hello, Henry, how are you?

Secretary Cisneros. Good, sir. I'm here with Senator Carol Moseley-Braun and Congressman Bobby Rush and Vince Lane of the housing authority, who's a good friend of yours, and about 200 folks at Progressive Community Church. And we are gathered together to talk about how to deal with the violence that's plagued the Chicago Housing Authority, Robert Taylor, Stateway, and other developments, over the last couple of days.

We're sitting at a table with about 20 guns that were picked up last night in police actions, a very violent weekend that resulted in about 15 shootings and 5 deaths. One 16-year-old was killed last night at Washington Park Homes, here in the area. We're looking at about 20 or so rifles, pistols, automatic weapons that were picked up in police action last night. So this is a very serious circumstance, and the group is very appreciative for your call, sir.

The President. Well, I'm very concerned that—all the efforts that have been made there over the last several years, and I'm glad Senator Moseley-Braun's there; I'm glad Bobby Rush is there; I know you're in his district. And I know Vince Lane remembers the trip that we took into Robert Taylor Homes back in 1991, before I even started running for President. And I'm so worried that all the progress that's been made will be undermined by the court decision. I wonder if some of this violence has not been almost aggravated by the decision. And I'm hoping that you'll be able to find a constitutional solution to this working with the Attorney General.

I know that this bike team effort last night did net a significant amount of guns and other things, and I'm encouraged by what you say. I want to encourage all the citizens who are there that we're going to do every-